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Publication number:

**0 288 255
A2**

12

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

21 Application number: 88303542.0

51 Int. Cl. C12P 9/00 , C07F 9/10

22 Date of filing: 20.04.88

30 Priority: 21.04.87 JP 96243/87

43 Date of publication of application:
26.10.88 Bulletin 88/43

84 Designated Contracting States:
CH DE FR GB IT LI NL SE

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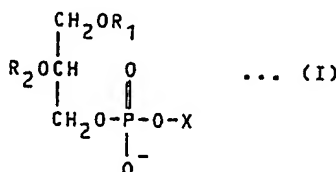
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54 Phospholipid derivatives.

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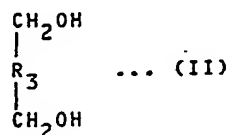
57 Phospholipid derivatives having two phosphatidyl residues in the molecule - which derivatives except for diphosphatidylglycerol are new compounds - are produced from a starting material phospholipid derivative by transphosphatidylation. In this method, a phospholipid derivative (I) represented by the formula



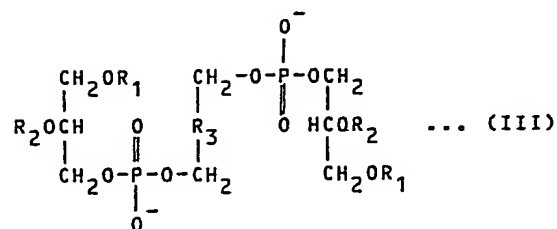
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is reacted with a chain polyhydric alcohol represented by the formula



in the presence of a phospholipase D having a transphosphatidylase activity (EC 3.1.4.4), thereby extracting a phospholipid derivative represented by the following formula from the reaction mixture



In the formulas, R_1 and R_2 represent acyl groups or alkyl groups, R_3 represents an alkylene group (proviso, hydrogen atom may be substituted with a hydroxyl group, an alkoxy group, a hydroxyalkyl group or the like), and X represents the organic residue remaining after the removal of one hydroxyl group of a compound containing hydroxyl group.

PHOSPHOLIPID DERIVATIVES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates generally to a method of producing phospholipid derivatives.

Utilizing their surface activity and physiological activity, known lecithins such as soybean lecithin and egg yolk lecithin have been widely used in the manufacture of foods, cosmetics, paints, lubricants, magnetic materials, animal feeds and agricultural chemicals, whereas new phospholipid derivatives produced by causing enzymes having a transphosphatidyl transfer activity to act on phospholipid derivatives and compounds
10 containing hydroxyl group are useful substances having advantageous properties over the raw material phospholipid derivatives in many cases. Therefore, the invention relates to a method of producing a new phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl groups from a known raw material phospholipid derivative by the transphosphatidyl transfer reaction.

15 Description of the Prior Art

Diphosphatidylglycerol (also called as cardiolipin) is known as a phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl groups in a molecule. This phospholipid derivative is widely distributed in the field of animals, plants and bacteria and therefore the usual practice to obtain this phospholipid derivative has been to extract it from a natural substance containing this phospholipid derivative, such as, the heart muscle or cerebrum of cattle or the cell of corynebacterium or brevibacterium. However, this method has been disadvantageous in that no matter what raw material is used, its content of the desired phospholipid
25 derivative is not so high that isolating the desired substance from the extract is very tedious. Also, this method has never been a means of mass production due to a limitation to the amount of raw material supply. Also, there has been known a method in which one molecule of diphosphatidylglycerol is produced from two molecules of phosphatidylglycerol by utilizing the transphosphatidyl transfer activity of a phospholipase D (Biochim. Biophys. Acta, 210, 350, 1970) and this method is restricted from the standpoint of raw material in that there is no reliable source of phosphatidylglycerol. In any way, excepting the
30 diphosphatidylglycerol, there has been known no phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl residues and also there has been established no method for synthesizing as occasion demands any phospholipid derivative of this type other than the diphosphatidylglycerol.

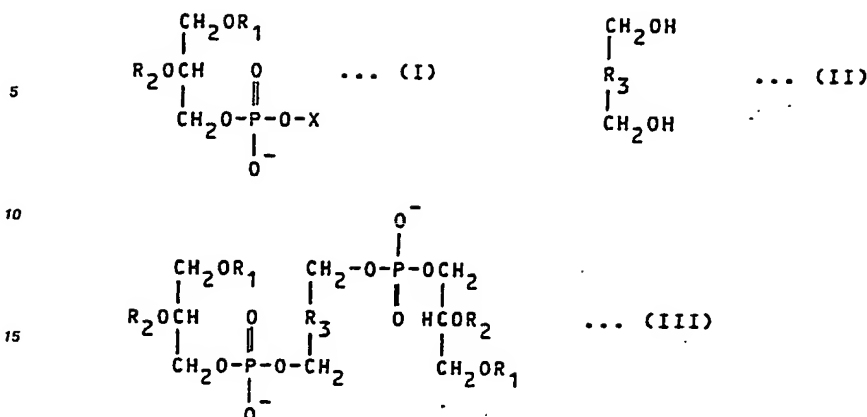
35 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a method of producing a phospholipid
40 derivative having two phosphatidyl residues by using a readily available, inexpensive phospholipid derivative as a starting material.

It is another object of the invention to provide such method of producing "phospholipid derivatives having two phosphatidyl residues" other than the diphosphatidylglycerol, thereby making it possible to utilize new phospholipid derivatives.

45 The production method of the invention succeeding in accomplishing the above objects has a feature that the phospholipid derivative given by the following general formula (I) and the chain polyhydric alcohol given by following general formula (II) are reacted in the presence of a phospholipase D having a transphosphatidyl transfer activity (EC 3.1.4.4) to obtain the phospholipid derivative given by the following general formula (III) from the reaction mixture.

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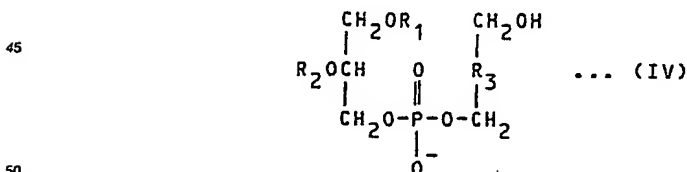
20 In the formulas, R_1 and R_2 represent acyl groups or alkyl groups, R_3 represents an alkylene group (proviso, hydrogen atom may be substituted with, for example, a hydroxyl group, an alkoxyl group or a hydroxyalkyl group), and X represents an organic residue remaining after the removal of one hydroxyl group of a compound containing hydroxyl group.

25 The symbols in the present formulae can represent generally those values they have in the specific compounds of these formulae which are identified herein. The acyl group can be an alkanoyl group. The alkyl, alkylene, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl or alkanoyl group can contain 1-6, for instance 1-4, carbon atoms.

The present method enables the new phospholipid derivatives of formula (III) to be obtained. Accordingly, the invention provides these new compounds per se, i.e. the phospholipid derivatives of formula (III) other than diphosphatidylglycerol.

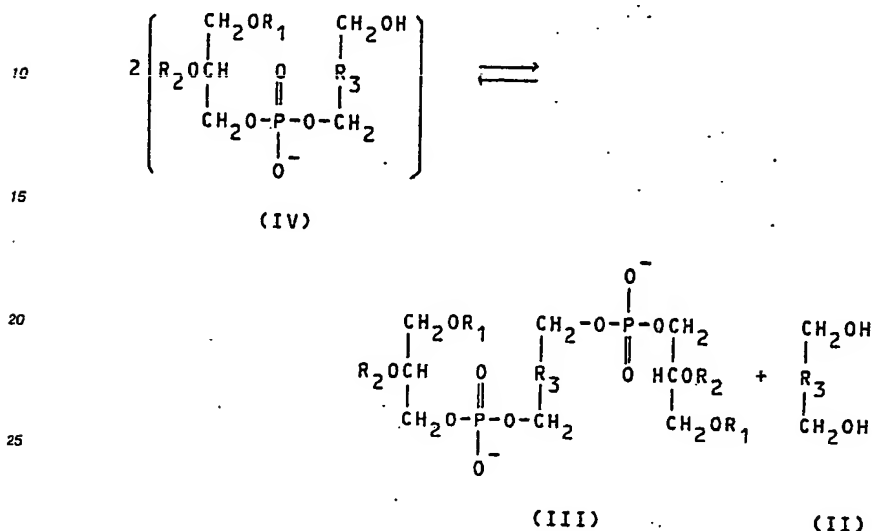
DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

35 After the occurrence of the above enzyme reaction, the reaction mixture also includes the compound of the following general formula (IV) in which one phosphatidyl group of the phospholipid derivative of the general formula (I) has been transferred to the polyhydric alcohol of the general formula (II), and therefore in the production method of the invention the reaction for producing the desired phospholipid derivative (III) is considered to consist in two stages of transphosphatidylation reactions, that is, the compound of the general
40 formula (IV) is first formed and then the second transphosphatidylation is caused in which the resulting compound having an alcoholic hydroxyl group at the molecular terminal serves as a phosphatidyl residue acceptor.



50 With the well-known transphosphatidylation which produces a new phospholipid derivative having a single phosphatidyl group from a phospholipid derivative of the general formula (I) type and a hydroxyl group-bearing compound, it is the usual practice to effect the reaction by using the compound containing hydroxyl group in a much excessive amount of over 100 times the moles of the phospholipid derivative in order to push an equilibrium towards the formation of a phospholipid derivative (III) and suppress the hydrolysis reaction. In accordance with the production method of the invention which produces a phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl residues by the abovementioned two-stage transfer

reaction, any excessive amount of the compound containing hydroxyl group or the polyhydric alcohol of the general formula (II) must be limited. The reason for this is considered to reside in that in addition to the second transphosphatidylaton, there can be caused the following balanced reaction in which the polyhydric alcohol of the general formula (II) participates and therefore the production of the phospholipid derivative (III) is suppressed with increase in the amount of the polyhydric alcohol (II).



The raw material phospholipid derivative (I) and the polyhydric alcohol (II) for the production of the phospholipid derivative (III) according to the production method of this invention are to be selected in dependence on the structure of the desired substance and are not particularly limited. However, specific examples of suitable materials for use may be cited as follows. The raw material phospholipid derivative (I) may be soybean lecithin, egg yolk lecithin, rape-seed lecithin, fractionated lecithin of any of these natural lecithins, synthetic phospholipid derivative or the like, and the polyhydric alcohol (II) may be glycerin, erithritol, adonitol, mannitol, sorbitol, sedoheptytol, 2-hydroxymethyl-1, 3-propanediol, etc.

While the phospholipase D used for causing the transphosphatidylaton may be any of those derived from animals, plants and microorganisms, one derived from any microorganism, particularly one derived from an actinomycete is most excellent from the standpoint of activity and economy and it is a suitable enzyme for use in the production method of the invention.

A typical reaction method for causing the two-stage transphosphatidylaton from the previously mentioned raw material is as follows.

After the raw material phospholipid derivative (I) has been suspended in water, the polyhydric alcohol (II) is added and then a phospholipase D and a calcium ion for activating it (causing the phospholipase D to exhibit a transphosphatidylaton activity) are added thereby performing an incubation. The addition amount of the polyhydric alcohol (II) should preferably be less than 50 times the moles of the phospholipid derivative for the reasons mentioned previously and usually a suitable one is from 2 to 40 times. The phospholipid derivative concentration can be selected as desired provided that the suspension can be agitated. The calcium ion concentration is selected from 1 to 100 mM and preferably from 4 to 30 mM. The reaction temperature and pH are determined in accordance with the characteristics of the enzyme used. Where the phospholipase D derived from a streptomyces is used, a preferred temperature is between 20 and 60°C (more preferably 35 to 50°C) and a suitable pH is over 4 (more preferably 5 to 8.4).

In addition a small amount of organic solvent can be added to the reaction system to facilitate the dispersion of the phospholipid derivative and active phospholipase D thereby to increase the reaction efficiency. Effective organic solvents include ethyl acetate, n-propyl n-propanate, 4-heptanone, isobutyl ketone, pentane, hexane, benzene, xylene, chloroform, etc. However, if the addition of such organic solvent is increased excessively, the second-stage transphosphatidylaton tends to become difficult to occur, although the first-stage transphosphatidylaton is accelerated. In the case of ethyl acetate, for example,

while the addition of 1 to 2 % (v/v) produces a good result, the addition of over about 6 % (v/v) results in a decrease yield of the product.

To extract the desired phospholipid derivative (III) from the reaction mixture, any given separation and purification means such as the solvent separation method employing acetone, ethanol or the like, the column chromatography employing silica gel, alumina gel, reverse phase carrier or the like or the thin layer chromatography may be applied.

In accordance with the present invention, a phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl residues can be easily produced by single and simple but efficient procedures by using phospholipid derivative available easily and inexpensively as a raw material. While, as a method of producing a phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl residues, the method of synthesizing such lecithin from two molecules of phosphatidylglycerol by the enzyme reaction has been available only for cardiolipin, the raw material phosphatidylglycerol has not been easily available and in fact the method has had to start from the synthesis of phosphatidylglycerol. Thus, the present invention has very great utility in that it provides a general and simple production method thus making it possible to synthesize a large number of new phospholipid derivatives.

EXAMPLES

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The present invention will now be described in greater detail by way of the following examples.

Example 1

25

A mixture of 1 to 20 mg of a polyhydric alcohol of the general formula (II), 20 μ l 20 mM of 20 mM acetate buffer (pH 5.5), 1 μ l of 500 mM CaCl_2 solution, 5 μ l of ethyl acetate, 5 μ l of an enzyme solution containing 0.24 units of actinomycete-derived phospholipase D and 2 mg of a commercial soybean lecithin (Unimills Inc.) containing 80 % (w/w) of phosphatidylcholine was incubated 50 °C for 60 minutes while shaking the reaction mixture. After the reaction had been completed, the desired substance was extracted with chloroform/methanol (2/1) and then the extract was developed by a silica-gel thin layer chromatography. A phosphorus detecting reagent was sprayed to the developed extract thereby subjecting it to quantitative analysis.

The following Table 1 shows the results (percentages of the products and unreacted phosphatidylcholine) obtained by using, as the polyhydric alcohol (II), glycerin, erythritol, sorbitol and mannitol, respectively, in the same exemplary cases as Example 1.

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50

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Table 1

	Glycerin				*	Sorbitol		Mannitol	
	0.25	1	5	20		1	5	1	20
Polyhydric Alcohol addition Weight (mg)					1				
Mole ratio versus phosphatidylcholine	1	4	20	80	3	2	10	2	40
Reaction mixture extract composition									
Phospholipid derivative (III)	3.2	27.9	9.6	2.8	15.3	39.6	21.8	11.6	13.0
Phospholipid derivative (IV)	Trace	42.6	66.9	89.7	21.5	21.6	38.0	21.2	51.2
Phosphatidic acid	20.1	6.3	4.5	Trace	5.0	10.5	8.6	16.1	6.2
Unreacted phospholipid derivative	70.1	14.3	13.9	3.2	40.5	17.6	21.9	41.8	19.4
Others	6.6	9.4	5.1	4.3	10.0	10.6	9.7	9.3	10.1

* Erythritol

Example 2

5

To a suspension containing 2.7 g of the same soybean lecithin (Unimills Inc.) as used in Example 1 and 240 ml of water, 60 ml of glycerin, 160 ml of 50 mM CaCl₂ solution, 265 ml of 20 mM acetate buffer (pH 5.5) and 5 ml of an enzyme solution containing 24 units of actinomycete-derived phospholipase D were added. Then, 10 ml of ethyl acetate was added and the mixture was reacted at 50 °C for 60 minutes while shaking it, thereby producing 902 mg of cardiolipin. When the reaction was effected in all the same manner except the addition of no ethyl acetate, the yield of cardiolipin was 695 mg. Example 3

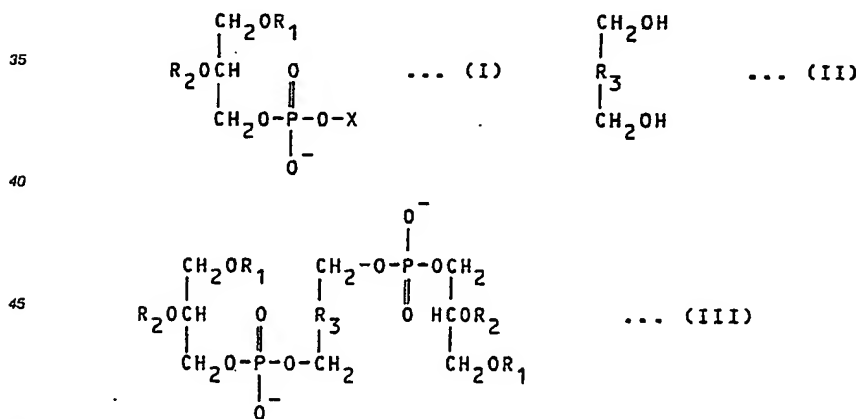
1470 μl of 50 mM CaCl₂ solution, 3897 μl of 20 mM acetate buffer (pH 5.5), 441 μl of glycerin and 73 μl of an enzyme solution containing 0.35 units of actinomycete-derived phospholipase D were added to 1470 μl of aqueous suspension containing 20 mg of a synthetic lecithin or dipalmitoyl phosphatidylcholine (Sigma Inc.) and were reacted at 45 °C for 2 hours while agitating the mixture. Then, the desired substance was extracted with chloroform-methanol (2/1) and the extract was separated by a silica-gel thin layer chromatography. Thereafter, the spots of the desired tetrapalmitoyl diphosphatidylglycerol were scraped off and the extract liquid was vaporized and dried up, thereby producing 6 mg of the desired phospholipid derivative.

Claims

25 1. A method of producing a phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl residues in a molecule comprising the steps of:

reacting at least one phospholipid derivative represented by the following general formula (I) with at least one polyhydric alcohol represented by the following general formula (II) in the presence of phospholipase D having a transphosphatidyl transfer activity; and

30 extracting a phospholipid derivative represented by the following general formula (III) from said reaction mixture:

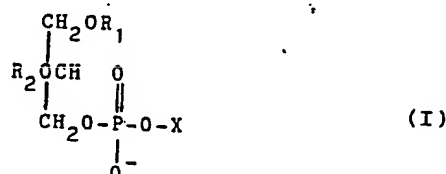


where R₁ and R₂ represent acyl or alkyl group, R₃ represents an alkylene group (a hydrogen atom is substitutable with a hydroxyl, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl group or the like), and X represents an organic residue remaining after the removal of one hydroxyl group of a compound containing hydroxyl group.

55 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said at least one phospholipid derivative (I) comprises a phospholipid derivative selected from a group consisting of natural lecithins such as soybean lecithin, egg yolk lecithin and rape-seed lecithin, phospholipid derivatives fractionated from said natural lecithins and synthetic phospholipid derivatives.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said at least one polyhydric alcohol (II) comprises a substance selected from a group consisting of glycerin, erythritol, adonitol, mannitol, sorbitol, sedoheptytol, 2-hydroxymethyl-1 and 3-propanediol.

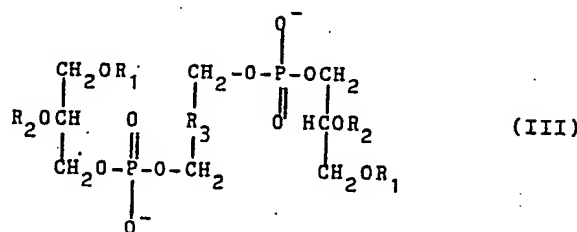
4. A method of producing a phospholipid derivative having two phosphatidyl residues in its molecule, which method comprises reacting a phospholipid derivative of formula (I):



with a polyhydric alcohol of formula (II):



in the presence of phospholipase D having transphosphatidylase activity, to produce a phospholipid derivative of formula (III):



where R_1 and R_2 are the same or different and represent an acyl or alkyl group, R_3 represents an alkylene group optionally bearing a substituent, and X represents an organic residue remaining after the removal of one hydroxyl group from a compound containing the hydroxyl group.

5. A method according to claim 4 wherein the optional substituent which R_3 bears is a hydroxyl, alkoxy or hydroxyalkyl group.

6. A method according to claim 4 or 5 wherein the phospholipid derivative (I) is a natural lecithin (for instance soybean lecithin, egg yolk lecithin or rape-seed lecithin), a phospholipid derivative fractionated from said natural lecithin, or a synthetic phospholipid derivative.

7. A method according to any one of claims 4-6 wherein the polyhydric alcohol (II) is selected from the group consisting of glycerin, erythritol, adonitol, mannitol, sorbitol, sedoheptytol, and 2-hydroxymethyl-1, 3-propanediol.

8. A phospholipid derivative of formula (III) as defined in any one of the preceding claims, other than diposphatidylglycerol.

9. A phospholipid derivative according to claim 8 which is a phospholipid derivative (III) referred to in Table 1 of Example 1 herein, however that derivative is produced.

10. Tetrapalmitoyl diposphatidylglycerol.

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